



AREA AGENCIES ON AGING ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
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TESTIMONY OF MARY ABLAN, MA, MSW ON HB 4865
BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE

My thanks to Rep. MacGregor for bringing attention to the issue of oral health and mobile dentistry. We see mobile dentistry as a critical tool in delivering oral health care to the elderly and adults with disabilities, many of whom cannot drive to an office and need transportation assistance.

Innovative models are now emerging to meet the unmet needs of older Michiganians. One example is "Dental Days," which brings a large group of dental hygienists to one location to provide cleanings and assessments using xrays. All patients are assisted in finding follow-up care, if they want it. This model has been used very successfully by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and the Crawford County Council on Aging. These agencies identify a location and recruit hygienists. They do outreach to find patients who haven't been to an office in the last year and need services. They provide transportation and find dentists to provide affordable or free follow-up care.

The aging network would like to grow this type of innovative program statewide and are respectfully requesting two changes in HB 4865 (H-1) draft 1 to make this possible:

- On page 5, line 23, after "at least 1 dentist or party who can" insert "make a reasonable attempt to." This caveat is critical to my members in order to sign the Memorandum of Agreement required by the bill. The reality is that despite the reasonable efforts of the agencies to provide for follow-up care, some patients choose not to pursue it.
- On page 8, line 12, remove "provides comprehensive dental services and." This change allows programs like Dental Days to take xrays so that hygienists can do a proper assessment. We would support added language requiring mobile programs to share the xrays with dentists providing follow-up care.